

may be a vague apprehension of this deterioration which has rendered the British generally averse from military service. There are critics of our public schools who maintain that the discipline which they enforce admirably calculated as it is for the training of efficient soldiers and administrators, cramps the lively activity that is needed for success in professions or callings which are less sequestered from the stressful competition of the struggle for life. Habit affects our ideas as well as our behaviour. It increases the effect of particular impressions, memories, and beliefs. Our devotion to games grows as we play them : our opinions on such subjects as religion, morality, and politics are hardened into prejudices which argument is powerless to assail. These prejudices are commonly miscalled "ideals." To compromise a point in a political or social dispute, may thus be stigmatized as the abandonment of an ideal, and is rarely possible to those who have not outgrown the leading-strings of habit.

The obsession of a mental habit may spread from an individual to a people which then becomes overpowered by a fixed idea that may launch it into a useless and unjustifiable war, or into such comprehensive philanthropic resolutions as the abolition of slavery. The crusades resulted from a fixed idea which pervaded Europe during two cen-

turies. A fixed idea has the effect of a habit. reinforcing the instinct which generates it. and the Press, by encouraging its growth, may bring to a bloody arbitrament such rivalry in progress as now breeds suspicion between England and Germany.

The tyranny of fixed ideas is strengthened if the reasoning impulse is completely satisfied by the vision of an accepted cause for every happening of life—if no blanks are left to be filled by